



---

### Washington's Commander-in-Chief's Guard

The Commander-in-Chief's Guard was an elite corps of soldiers dedicated to protecting General George Washington and to safeguard his important papers and equipment.

At Valley Forge, the guard stayed close to the general in huts near Washington's Headquarters. The guard was initially organized in 1776. To be a guard a soldier needed to stand between five feet, eight inches and five feet, ten inches to be clean in appearance, and have been born in Virginia – General Washington's home state. Originally there approximately fifty members.

Here, at Valley Forge, the Guard became a model of the American army under the direction of Baron Friederich von Steuben. The baron focused his initial training on the guard, who later increased their numbers and sequentially trained all the soldiers at the encampment.

Within a month of beginning training the guard displayed their newly learned accuracy and effectiveness to the officers demonstrating the potential benefits of training at Valley Forge. Steuben commented, "We marched together, and in a fortnight my company knew perfectly how to bear arms, had a military air, knew how to march, to form a column, deploy and execute some little maneuvers with excellent precision."

Towards the end of the war, the number in the Guard shrunk to approximately 70 officers and men. Caleb Gibbs of Rhode Island, served as the Guard's commander for the majority of the time.

Through their diligence and training, the life guard played a notable role in the Revolution as evidenced by General Washington's adequate security throughout the war.